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Extension
Home Economics

TEACHING FAMILIES To Live With Change



Extension Service
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Extension Home Economics

TEACHING FAMILIES To Live With Change

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HOME ECONOMICS—A BASIC EXTENSION MISSION

Extension educational programs in home economics are designed to help families identify needs, make decisions, and utilize resources to improve their quality of living. Programs include information on managing a home; providing nutritious, safe, and attractive meals; improving personal and community relationships; providing a safe and attractive home environment; managing family resources; and planning and caring for clothing.

These programs are offered to people of all income levels, with major emphasis on reaching rural Americans living outside cities of 50,000 or more. Home Economics has been one of the key missions of the Cooperative Extension Service since its beginning.

The Cooperative Extension Service has provided innovative, nationwide, out-of-school education to Americans for more than half a century. It has helped people acquire the knowledge and skills they need to adapt to changing social, economic, and cultural conditions through the years.

Extension programs in home economics,

agriculture, 4-H youth, and community resource development are conducted jointly by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), state land-grant universities, and local governments.

Extension offices are located in each of the states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Guam.

Cooperative planning and interdisciplinary team approaches help pool human and financial resources for Extension work.

The Extension staff has access to the knowledge and research resources of the state land-grant universities and USDA, and performs a "linking" role between educational institutions and the public. Extension conveys family and farm problems to researchers, and communicates research results back to the farmer or homemaker. The staff works with local people to plan programs directed to local needs.

Professionals, paraprofessional aides, and volunteer leaders are trained to act as multipliers of knowledge, extending Extension education to others.

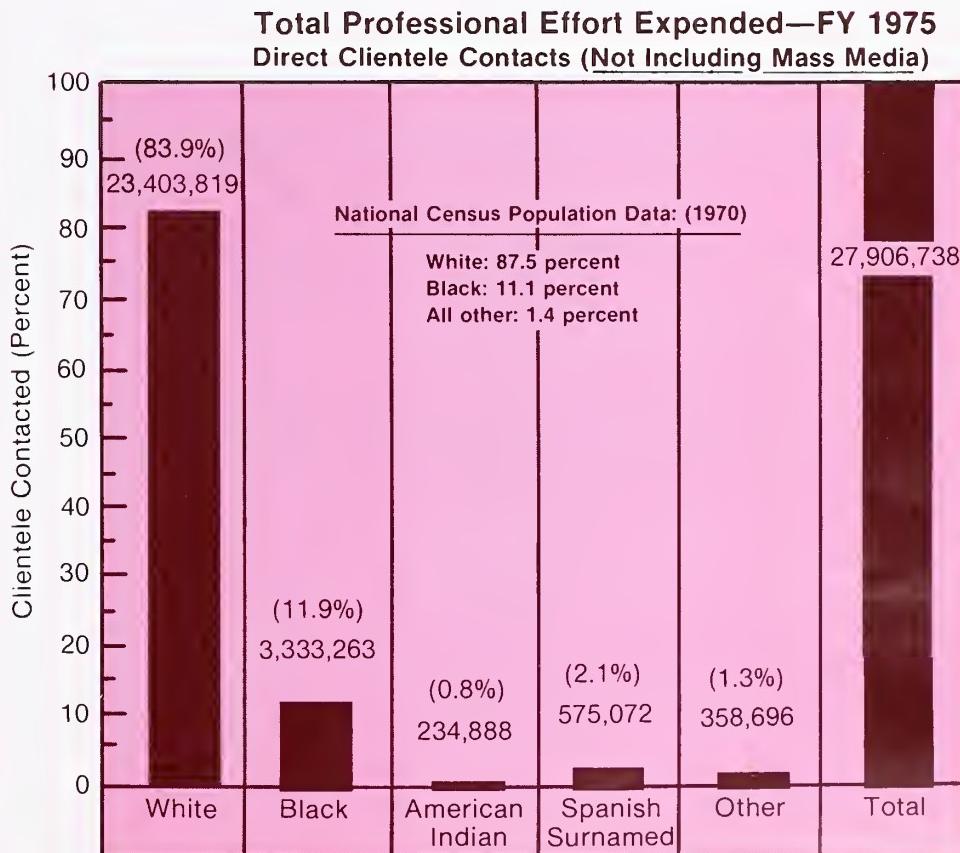
EXTENSION HOME ECONOMICS TODAY . . .

Changes in society affect family life. Extension home economics educators and volunteer leaders are helping families understand and adapt to the effects of social, economic, cultural, and technological changes.

In 1976, "Living With Change," a national long-range educational emphasis, was begun by the Extension-USDA home economics staff. Many state Extension Services were already showing consumers that they had information to help Americans live with change. The federal staff prepared educational materials to support those efforts. A new USDA slide set, publications, exhibits, and TV and radio spots, told audiences how to "live with change."

More than 4,000 Extension home economists, assisted by 6,800 paraprofessional aides and 600,000 volunteer leaders, reach millions of families each year with Extension home economics programs. Almost 28 million direct clientele contacts were made in 1975 by professional Extension home economists (fig. 1).

Figure 1—Extension Home Economics Summary



The National Extension Homemakers Council (NEHC)—an important Extension home economics audience—has 600,000 members, who belong to 35,000 clubs or groups in 41 states and Puerto Rico. These homemakers serve as volunteer leaders to their groups and others, conducting regular, monthly educational programs on home and family living.

According to a recent survey, NEHC members contribute 25,000 "woman-years" of volunteer leadership annually. They reach 2 million adults and a million youth. Their services would cost more than \$90 million a year if they were paid at the minimum wage rate! Their influence extends around the world. Many Extension homemakers are active members of the Associated Country Women of the World, and participate in the triennial world meetings.

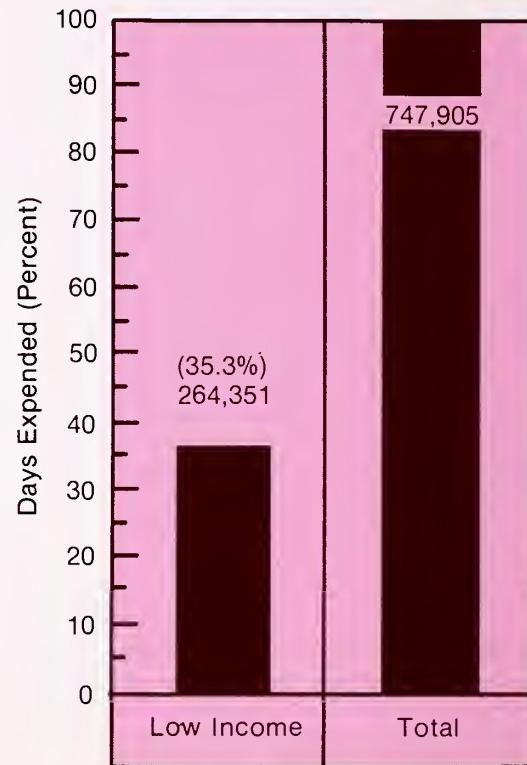
Educational backup and program support are provided to NEHC by Extension specialists and research and administrative staffs at the land-grant universities and USDA.

Low-income families, ethnic minorities, the elderly, youth, young families, and the handicapped receive special attention in Extension home economics programs.

During 1975, the percentage of ethnic contacts through the home economics program related closely to the representation of those ethnic groups in the population (fig. 1). Home economics staff spent 35.3 percent of their time reaching low-income audiences (fig. 2).

Figure 2

Staff Days Spent, by Income Group



THE SCOPE OF THE JOB

Extension home economists reach the public through mass media, workshops, mobile classrooms, volunteer leaders, paraprofessional aides, and other methods. They teach with newsletters, correspondence courses, publications, videocassettes, slides, computers, telelectures, and cooperative efforts with other organizations.

Extension home economists assist families in the major areas of concern listed in table 1 below:

Table 1—Percentage of time spent nationally by professional Extension home economists, by major areas of concern (1975)¹

Major Areas of Concern	Percent of Time
Food and nutrition	39.8
Housing and home environment	20.9
Textiles and clothing	13.1
Family resource management	10.7
Individual and family development	9.5
Health and safety	6.0
TOTAL	100.0

Consumer education is a part of each area. The time of paraprofessionals and volunteers is not included.

THE PRIORITIES

Food and Nutrition

Extension provides education in nutrition, including meal planning, food selection, buying, preparation, home production, preservation, storage, safety, and sanitation.

Food and nutrition education required a higher percentage of professional staff time in 1975 than any other program area (table 1). Food consumption, family nutrition, food safety, food preservation, and buying the best nutrition with available food dollars were emphasized with most audiences—especially the low income, who account for more than half of the nutrition professionals' work days. This includes time spent training paraprofessionals and volunteers.

Making wise food choices is the key to good nutrition. Unfortunately, many people do not know how to make those choices at the marketplace, plan meals, or prepare and store foods properly.

During fiscal year 1975, Extension home economists stressed:

- Nutrition for low-income families

- Food safety
- Food preservation
- Evaluation of nutrition teaching methods.

Nutrition for Low-income Families

More than half (53.5 percent) of the Extension professional effort in food and nutrition was spent with the hard-to-reach, low-income audience.

Extension's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) employs more than 6,800 paraprofessional aides to provide an in-depth educational program to help low-income families improve the nutritional level of their diets. The aides are trained and supervised by Extension home economists.

About 240,000 *enrolled* program families are taught annually in 1,441 cities, county sites, and Indian reservations. Also, an average of 89,000 *non-enrolled* homemakers were reached monthly during the past year. In addition, about 800,000 youth were reached last year. More than 2 million youth have been reached since the inception of the program. Since 1969, more than a million families (about 4.6 million family members) have participated in



EFNEP aide (background) shows homemaker how to wash greens and conserve nutrients.

EFNEP and learned better food and nutrition practices.

The program is constantly evaluated. Five studies were initiated or completed during FY 1975. Subjects included were EFNEP accomplishments and future needs, evaluation of Mulligan Stew TV series, evaluation of phonoviewer method; developing and testing a model to assist in progression of EFNEP families, and evaluation of nutrition lessons for 8-to-12-year-olds. Results of these studies, along with analyses of data show:

- ***Change has taken place in food consumption patterns.***

This change can be measured two ways:

1. The percentage of homemakers who are now providing one serving of food daily from each of the four food groups (milk, meat, fruit-vegetables, and bread-cereals) has increased.
2. The percentage of homemakers consuming the top-rated "2-2-4-4" diet (two servings of milk and meat; four servings of fruits-vegetables and bread-cereals) has increased. This has changed from 9 percent to 23 percent in 2

Homemaker uses proper technique to can foods safely at home.

years. USDA's Economic Research Service states that one of the reasons more homemakers don't achieve optimum diets is limited income.

- **The target audience is being reached.** Eighty-five percent of the program families have annual incomes of less than \$5,000. Minorities accounted for 62 percent of participation as of the end of June 1974. Fifty percent of the homemakers have completed the eighth grade or less.
- **Awareness and participation in the food stamp program and school lunch program have grown, and the utilization of community resources has increased.** Fifty-five percent of the families are receiving food stamps. Eighty-three percent of their children get school lunches. Referral systems have been established with other agencies in most sites to assist families with other problems.
- **The employment of paraprofessionals.** About 24,000 aides, mostly from low-income families, have been employed since the beginning of the program in 1968, and have received direct benefits



from their training and work experience.

- **Volunteers have helped with program delivery and represent community involvement.** Volunteers are a significant resource. More than 192,900 volunteers have worked in the program. A study showed that 60 percent of the volunteers had family incomes below \$4,000 per year.

Food Safety

Estimates of incidences of foodborne illness range from 5 million to 20 million annually, but only about 30,000 are reported. Extension action programs in food safety have increased in recent years.

Extension-USDA food safety leaflets reached more than a million consumers in FY 1975.

Slide sets and filmstrips on food safety were also produced for states to use. Shows for phonoviewer (a small group viewing device similar to a toy TV) were developed for use with low-income and other audiences.

Most states conducted educational programs in food safety. The Wisconsin Extension staff for example, reported these food safety efforts during one year:

- 244 newspaper articles on food safety and preservation.
- 25 home economists presented food safety radio programs.
- 3,064 adults visited food safety exhibit.

- 8,000 shoppers contacted in 71 supermarkets by trained volunteer leaders.
- 100 TV spots and shows.
- 15,000 telephone calls handled on safe food practices.
- 19,000 reached by food safety, sanitation and preservation meetings.

Food Preservation

Rising prices have encouraged many consumers to can and freeze food at home. For some, this is the first time they've tried it; they need help to preserve food safely.

Through the efforts of Extension-USDA staff, state Extension Services, and other USDA agencies, a series of nine regional press briefings on home canning were held in 1975. More than 500 media people received current information on food preservation. Eleven thousand food preservation packets were distributed to states for county use and 213 copies of a new food preservation slide set were purchased by states.

It's estimated that two-thirds of the 860,643 U.S. Department of Agriculture publications sent to state and county Extension Services during 1 month (April 1975) were on food preservation.

Texas Extension home economists, in a priority effort on food preservation, reached more than 175,000 persons in 177 counties during the period from June 1974 to July 1975. Mass media contacts reached additional thousands, and 195,000 publications were distributed.

Minnesota distributed 90,000 publications and answered 6,500 calls on canning and freezing, during one food preservation season.

These efforts are worth it. At this time, not one case of food poisoning due to improper canning methods has been reported to the Extension-USDA staff.

Installing storm windows can mean a sizeable difference in heating bills and energy conservation.



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Installing
sealant



Housing and Home Environment

Extension helps families assess their needs, available resources, and alternatives for housing, home furnishings and equipment. It offers advice on principles for selecting, using, and caring for such purchases, and on economical use of energy in the home.

Housing and home environment accounts for a fifth of Extension home economics time. This includes educational work on housing, home furnishings and equipment—where the U.S. family spends almost a third of its budget.

Choosing suitable housing is a major decision for individuals and families, regardless of income level. Approximately 30 percent of family income each year is required for housing, furnishings and household equipment. Much inadequate housing remains, especially in rural areas. The building industry and government-subsidized programs have not kept pace with needs.

Housing affects the attitude, health, comfort, and stability of individuals and families. Extension home economists

provide expert information to help families decide whether to rent or buy, plan new housing, or remodel.

Extension programs help consumers reduce the cost of household operation with information on:

- energy management and use; reducing waste
- selection, use and care of household furnishings
- equipment and its maintenance
- energy efficiency labeling
- the concept of "life cycle" costs
- improved insulation
- improved design in new housing
- amount of living space needed

Approximately 300,000 families in 154 Texas counties recently participated in a television home study program called "You Can Do It", on home care and maintenance. Workshops, direct mail, and a "Fix It Festival" attracted 32,000 people. Texans estimated they saved \$100,000 through the help they received.

At federal, state and local levels, Extension educators are helping consumers learn how to conserve energy. Almost every state emphasizes energy conservation in

Paraprofessional (left) introduces homemakers to a new Extension housing van, where they can learn to do simple home repairs.



their housing, furnishings and household equipment programs.

Extension specialists at the federal level developed a new U.S. Department of Agriculture slide set titled "Energy: Use It Wisely Around the Home" for local Extension educators to use in teaching. Publications titled *Energy Management in the Home* and *Energy Management Checklist* also were prepared for national use.

With many new fabrics and finishes on the market, homemakers need up-to-date information to make wise clothing purchases.

Textiles and Clothing

Extension helps consumers develop knowledge and skills to analyze their clothing needs and use clothing resources effectively to satisfy social and psychological needs, within their financial means.

Textiles and clothing education, requiring 13 percent of Extension home economics time, emphasizes clothing selection and care, and management of clothing expenditures. Education on constructing and recycling clothing helps consumers reduce costs. They are increasing their requests for Extension assistance to improve their ability to use clothing dollars wisely.

Extension home economists help consumers learn to make new clothing, to remake clothing to extend wear life, and to become better informed clothing shoppers.

Recent legislation and changes in regulations on textiles and textile products are resulting in changes in fabric composition and finishes. Consumers want to be informed, and Extension home economists, kept up-to-date by state specialists, are meeting this need.



A "Sewing Smorgasbord" provided Ohio consumers with information on home sewing, fabric, notions, equipment, and clothing construction methods. More than 400 attended this multicounty effort.

In 1975, 668,641 girls and boys took part in some type of 4-H clothing project.

In Kentucky recently, 1,580 consumers received information in a "Recycle Your Wardrobe" program. More than 23,000 copies of a new publication on that subject were distributed. In one county, 589 garments were recycled, saving \$2,445.

Family Resource Management

Extension informs people on family economics, decisionmaking, management, and consumer education. It helps them improve understanding, skills, and practices in using available resources to attain family and personal goals throughout the life cycle.

Family resource management claimed 10 percent of the Extension home economists' time in 1975.

A survey indicates that about 30 percent of the U.S. adult population is "functioning with difficulty" in the area of consumer economics. Another 30 percent are "functional, but not proficient" in such basics as money management and the wise use of credit and insurance.

In FY 1975, the Cooperative Extension Service reported approximately 3 million direct contacts in family resource management. (This did not include mass media efforts.)



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Extension home economist (right) helps couple work on financial records.

Extension home economists carry out programs to help people:

- Improve knowledge, skills, and practices to effectively adjust to the economic, social, technological, and political changes affecting their lives.
- Increase efficiency in acquiring, allocating, maintaining, conserving, using, and disposing of resources to meet family and individual goals
- Determine and practice methods to increase family and individual economic stability and security throughout the life cycle.
- Know and use economic principles and management processes when making decisions involving private, public, and natural resources.
- Know consumer business rights and responsibilities, and act responsibly in the marketplace, in consumer affairs, and in consumer legislation.

State family resource management specialist uses TV to help viewers with money management.

Since 1974, Extension Service-USDA has provided special funds to four states to develop programs and materials on family financial management for national use. Three states are developing and testing computer-assisted programs in budgeting, spending for housing, auto costs, etc. The fourth state is testing films and printed materials to be used with various audiences.

A national workshop on "Family Adjustment to Economic Change" was held in January 1976 and attended by approximately 100 participants from 45 states and Puerto Rico.

Two national committees developed guidelines for youth programs in consumer education and management.

Some typical state programs in family resource management:

- Managing family resources—Texas reported that 112,000 people from 131 counties received information in 1975.
- Estate-planning—in North Carolina, approximately 10,000 people attended training from 1972-75.
- Increasing shopping skills—Louisiana Extension home economists estimate that 160,000 persons were reached in 1975. Another 27,000 learned how to use credit wisely.
- Family financial management—in Connecticut, a series of 10 lessons reached residents over a 2-year period. Titled "You Owe It To Yourself," the series has been offered on television and by trained community leaders throughout the state.



Individual and Family Development

Extension provides parent education for child growth and development, stable and creative family relationships, interdependent family-community functioning, and decisionmaking related to family values.

Individual and Family Development has grown in importance as nationwide trends in economic and social pressures have created an increasing awareness of adult and child development needs. A higher percentage of young families in the population, and more working mothers have increased demands for education in family life and child development.

Legislators and citizens are voicing concern about the importance and role of the family in providing a high quality environment for marriage, parenting, and family-community relationships.

Extension educators encourage families to create intellectual and emotional surroundings that provide full development for all family members and opportunities for satisfying family relationships.

Five state Extension Services—Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, North and South Dakota—cooperated to create a series of 12 television programs on marriage. The TV shows were accompanied by a viewer's guide designed for self study by young married couples.

Viewers contacted in an evaluation study said the programs increased their knowledge of marriage and improved their own marriages.



Through self-study programs, young couples like this can develop strong family relationships and useful skills.



An outstanding program in Massachusetts deals with the serious problem of child abuse and neglect. Extension staff cooperate with agencies such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and the local mental health center.

Massachusetts Extension agents, with the help of university specialists, trained 37 homemaker assistants. Homemaker assistants work with high-risk, multiproblem, low-income families, living in conditions that have led to child abuse and neglect. These assistants help to establish positive relationships with mothers, and reduce the incidence of abuse and neglect.

In Nassau County, New York, an Extension educational training program for day-care providers operates out of a storefront location in the community it serves. Paraprofessional aides trained by Extension extend this effort. Nearly 300 day-care providers received assistance.

Health and Safety

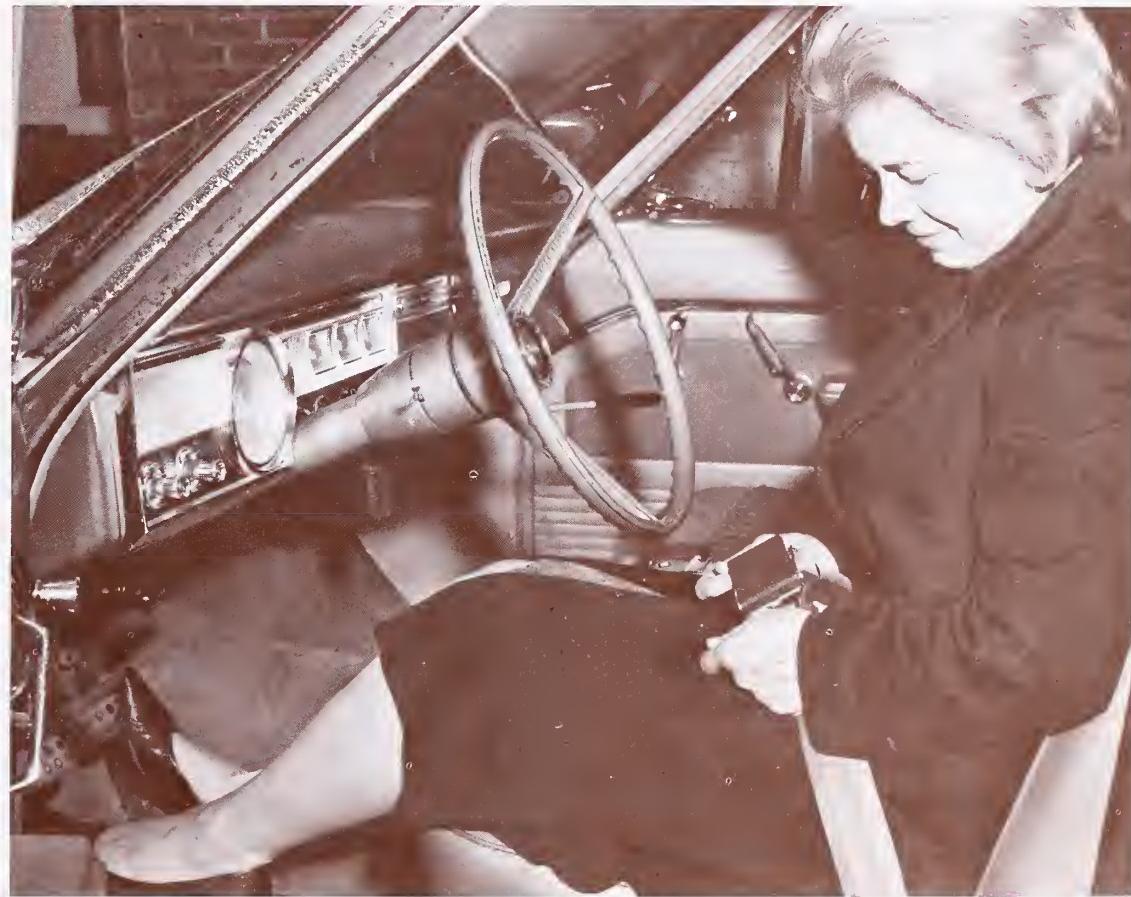
Extension provides educational programs on prevention of illness, use of available health services and facilities, and identification of needs for additional health facilities and services. Extension also provides educational programs to help reduce injuries and fatalities in the home, on the farm and ranch, and on rural roads and highways.

Health and safety, including food safety; and prevention of accidents, illness, and disease are receiving increased Extension attention. Extension Service is viewed by many as having a unique facility for reaching families with preventive health education, and providing leadership through coordinated programs with health and safety agencies.

Family Health

Research has meant better health and longer life for many Americans, but health problems are still a major concern. Extension's informal educational system is ideal for reaching people with health information.

Automobile safety is stressed by Extension educators and volunteer leaders.



Extension-USDA staff recently asked state staffs to identify health problems needing increased educational emphasis. Problems they identified were: nutrition, obesity and weight control, heart disease, dental health, mental and emotional health, and general health education.

Extension cooperates with the National Institutes of Health on high blood pressure educational programs, and with the Center for Disease Control's Immunization Branch to provide educational materials to families.

South Dakota Extension homemakers participated in a state-wide cancer detection program conducted by the State Health Department and the American Cancer Society. Thermography, a new detection method, was used to screen 25,910 women for breast cancer. One out of 20 was referred to a physician. This program was conducted in predominantly rural areas.

Safety

Each state Extension Service has appointed a home economics staff member to provide leadership for safety education and action programs.

Extension health educator (seated) and young Indian homemaker work on plans for a health education project.



Handicapped homemakers need help in designing kitchens that serve their needs.

In Georgia, the safety leader sends a monthly packet of radio programs, news releases and program leader's guides to each county. Programs have emphasized safe selection, use and care of power tools and equipment, self-protection in the home and on the streets, and poison prevention.

Forty-two states and Puerto Rico have a state Extension Homemakers Council safety chairman. These volunteers reported that 37,905 people received training in traffic safety in 1975. Another million people were reached through public meetings and individual contacts.

State Extension home economists conduct safety workshops for club chairmen, who then direct safety programs in their communities. A home economist from ES-USDA serves on the board of directors of the National Safety Council.

Handicapped

In Minnesota, Extension is completing a 3-year project assisted by federal funds that will accomplish three primary goals:

- Develop skills of nonprofessional program aides who work with disabled homemakers.
- Help family members adjust to the situation created when someone



becomes disabled.

- Develop a television series with study guide and other resource material for assisting the handicapped.

A deafness center at Winston-Salem, North Carolina, serves as a pilot project for home

economics service to the deaf. The Agricultural Extension Service of North Carolina State University was host to a workshop on "Techniques in Working with the Deaf," attended by Extension personnel from many states.

A LOOK TO THE FUTURE

The Extension Service, as in no past period in history, is being challenged to adjust programs and methods to meet the rapidly changing needs and life patterns of families. Projecting into the 1980's, strong trends appear toward:

- A need for some shift from problem solving to prevention.
- A greater focus on total family and multidisciplinary action programs.
- Innovative approaches to reach and attract special target audiences (the young, aged, handicapped, minorities, low-income, etc.).
- Expanded outreach and support of Extension programs through increased numbers of paraprofessionals and volunteer leaders.
- Coordination of action programs with other groups and agencies, when such combined efforts permit Extension Home Economics objectives to be met more adequately.
- Better understanding, increased awareness, and strengthened support for Extension Home Economics programs at the local, state, and national levels.

For More Information

Contact the Extension State Leader, Home Economics, at your state land-grant university at the address below:

Alabama—Auburn University, Auburn 36830

Alaska—University of Alaska, Fairbanks 99701

Arizona—University of Arizona, Tucson 85721

Arkansas—P.O. Box 391, Little Rock 72203

California—University of California,
2200 University Ave., Berkeley 94720

Colorado—Colorado State University,
Fort Collins 80521

Connecticut—University of Connecticut, Storrs 06268

Delaware—University of Delaware, Newark 19711

District of Columbia—Federal City College and
Washington Technical Institute, 1331 H St., N.W.,
Washington 20005

Florida—University of Florida, Gainesville 32601

Georgia—University of Georgia, Athens 30601

Guam—University of Guam, P.O. Box EK, Agana 96910

Hawaii—University of Hawaii, Honolulu 96822

Idaho—University of Idaho, Morrill Hall, Moscow 83843

Illinois—University of Illinois, Urbana 61801

Indiana—Purdue University, Lafayette 47907

Iowa—Iowa State University, Ames 50010

Kansas—Kansas State University, Manhattan 66506

Kentucky—University of Kentucky, Lexington 40506

Louisiana—Louisiana State University,
Baton Rouge 70803

Maine—University of Maine, Orono 04473

Maryland—University of Maryland, College Park 20742
Massachusetts—University of Massachusetts,
Amherst 01002
Michigan—Michigan State University,
East Lansing 48823
Minnesota—University of Minnesota, St. Paul 55101
Mississippi—Mississippi State University,
Mississippi State 39762
Missouri—University of Missouri,
309 University Hall, Columbia 65201
Montana—Montana State University, Bozeman 59715
Nebraska—University of Nebraska, Lincoln 68503
Nevada—University of Nevada, Reno 89507
New Hampshire—University of New Hampshire,
Taylor Hall, Durham 03824
New Jersey—Rutgers—The State University,
P.O. Box 231, New Brunswick 08903
New Mexico—New Mexico State University,
Las Cruces 88001
New York—N.Y. State College of Agriculture,
Ithaca 14853
North Carolina—North Carolina State University,
Raleigh 27607
North Dakota—North Dakota State University,
Fargo 58102
Ohio—Ohio State University,
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Oklahoma—Oklahoma State University,
Stillwater 74074
Oregon—Oregon State University, Corvallis 97331
Pennsylvania—The Pennsylvania State University,
University Park 16802
Puerto Rico—University of Puerto Rico,
Rio Piedras 00928
Rhode Island—University of Rhode Island,
Kingston 02881
South Carolina—Clemson University, Clemson 29631
South Dakota—South Dakota State University,
Brookings 57006
Tennessee—University of Tennessee, Knoxville 37901
Texas—Texas A&M University, College Station 77843
Utah—Utah State University, Logan 84321
Vermont—University of Vermont, Burlington 05401
Virginia—Virginia Polytechnic Institute and
State University, Blacksburg 24061
Virgin Islands—P.O. Box L, Kingshill, St. Croix 00850
Washington—Washington State University,
Pullman 99163
West Virginia—West Virginia University,
294 Coliseum, Morgantown 26506
Wisconsin—University of Wisconsin,
432 North Lake St., Madison 53706
Wyoming—University of Wyoming,
Box 3354 Univ. Station, Laramie 82070

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